

Congressman Sends Letter to Trade Representative Regarding Russian Ban on U.S. Poultry

Washington, DC – Congressman Sanford D. Bishop, Jr. (GA-2) today sent a letter to U.S. Trade Representative Ronald Kirk urging him to support the Georgia Poultry industry.

Congressman Bishop reminded Ambassador Kirk that the State of Georgia is the nation's number one poultry exporter, with over \$555 million of poultry exported from the state annually.

Since January of this year, poultry exports to Russia have ceased as a result of a Russian ban on the use of hyper-chlorinated water in poultry processing. Since the issuance of the ban, U.S. poultry producers have substituted chlorine with alternative anti-microbial agents. However, Russia still prohibits poultry importation.

The current ban has potential for economic disaster for the Second Congressional District, as well as the state of Georgia. In an effort to resume poultry export with Russia, Congressman Bishop requested that Ambassador Kirk bring the issue to the attention of President Obama for consideration at the impending G8 Summit.

Congressman Bishop said in a letter dated June 16, 2010, that "a continued ban on U.S. poultry exports to Russia would not only have a direct and dramatic impact on our State, but also my Congressional District, which is the third largest poultry producer in the State of Georgia, and twenty-second nation-wide, with over \$447 million in total production."

"It is absolutely vital that our two nations resume poultry trade. As such, I would like to urge you to include this important issue on the agenda when President Obama meets with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev for the upcoming G8 Summit."

The full text of Congressman Bishop's letter to Ambassador Kirk follows:

June 16, 2010

The Honorable Ronald Kirk
United States Trade Representative
600 Seventeenth Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20508

Dear Ambassador Kirk:

I am writing this letter to express my concern regarding the current ban imposed on United States poultry exports to Russia.

On January 1, 2010, Russia enforced a regulation that prohibited the use of hyper-chlorinated water in the processing of poultry products. In a good faith effort to comply with the wishes of the Russian Government in this matter, the U.S Poultry Industry substituted chlorine with alternative anti-microbial agents. It is our understanding that this change meets or exceeds the Russian Government's regulations in this regard. However, despite the U.S. Poultry Industry's good faith efforts, our two nations have not been able to reach a satisfactory poultry trade agreement.

As a result, all U.S. poultry exports to Russia have come to a halt since January. Total U.S. poultry trade with Russia amounted to over \$1.4 billion annually and has become a critical market for the U.S. Poultry Industry and major producer states.

In the State of Georgia, for example, the total value of poultry production amounts to \$3.9 billion - - the largest in the nation. However, Georgia is also the number one poultry exporter in the nation, with over \$555 million in annual exports. More importantly, a continued ban on U.S. poultry exports to Russia would not only have a direct and dramatic impact on our State, but also my Congressional District, which is the third largest poultry producer in the State of Georgia, and twenty-second nation-wide, with over \$447 million in total production.

It is absolutely vital that our two nations resume poultry trade. As such, I would like to urge you to include this important issue on the agenda when President Obama meets with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev for the upcoming G8 Summit.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and should you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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